

identical feature recited in Claim 6 was determined by the Examiner to place that claim in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 16 and 18 as now amended patentably define over the prior art of record.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Applicants request that the subject patent application be passed to issuance without delay.


Attached hereto is a document entitled VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE identifying the amendments made to the claims.

It is believed that no fees are presently due. However, should this determination be incorrect, the Patent Office officials are hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 13-2759 for any and all fees that may be owing. The undersigned is to be notified of any and all charges to the aforementioned deposit account.

Date:

7/14/03

Respectfully submitted,


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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

The changes made by the subject Amendment are indicated below. Bracketing indicates material that has been deleted while underlining indicates material that has been added.

Claim 2 has been cancelled.

3. (Twice Amended) The method as in claim [2] 6 including the further step of maintaining said purged containers in a generally upright position with said inert gas retained therein to thereby prevent the influx of air into said purged containers.

5. (Twice Amended) The method as claimed in claim [2] 6 wherein said step of grinding said roasted coffee directly into a container filling apparatus is carried out within a sealed enclosure having substantially all of the oxygen therein removed.

6. (Twice Amended) [The method as claimed in claim 2] A method of processing roasted coffee to improve the retention of carbon dioxide and aromatics liberated from the roasted coffee, the method comprising the steps of:

- (i) preparing one or more containers for receiving coffee therein;
- (ii) purging said containers of contained air through flushing said containers with an inert gas;
- (iii) transporting and delivering roasted coffee to a grinding circuit;
- (iv) grinding said roasted coffee directly into a container filling apparatus;
- (v) with said container filling apparatus, delivering said ground coffee directly into said purged containers; and,

(vi) sealing said containers to maximize the retention of carbon dioxide and aromatics liberated from said roasted coffee and to minimize contact of said ground roasted coffee with the air,

wherein said step of grinding said roasted coffee directly into a container filling apparatus is carried out within a modified oxygen depleted atmosphere and said steps of grinding said roasted coffee directly into a container filling apparatus and delivering said ground coffee directly into said purged containers are completed with minimal delay between successive steps to minimize the loss of carbon dioxide gas liberated from said coffee and to minimize the degassification of said coffee prior to the sealing of said coffee within said containers.

16. (Twice Amended) A method of processing roasted coffee beans to minimize the loss of carbon dioxide and aromatics liberated from the coffee beans following roasting, the method comprising the steps of preparing one or more containers for receiving roasted coffee beans therein, purging said containers of contained air through flushing with an inert gas and thereafter maintaining said purged containers in a generally upright position with said inert gas retained therein to prevent the influx of air into said purged containers, without delay and without allowing said roasted coffee beans to accumulate in storage bins or staging areas transporting and delivering said roasted coffee beans directly to a container filling apparatus, with said container filling apparatus delivering said roasted coffee beans directly into said purged containers, and, thereafter, sealing said containers to maximize the retention of carbon dioxide and aromatics liberated from said roasted coffee beans and to minimize contact of said roasted coffee beans with the air, said step of transporting roasted coffee beans to said container filling apparatus comprising transportation of said roasted coffee beans directly from a roasting circuit with minimal delay and

minimal degasification, said coffee beans transported in an oxygen depleted environment, said step of delivering said roasted coffee beans directly into said purged containers with said container filling apparatus carried out within a modified oxygen depleted atmosphere.

18. (Twice Amended) A method of processing roasted coffee to minimize the loss of carbon dioxide gas and aromatics liberated from the coffee, the method comprising the steps of preparing one or more containers for receiving roasted coffee therein and maintaining said purged containers in a generally upright position, transporting and delivering roasted coffee to a grinding circuit located within an enclosure having an oxygen depleted atmosphere, grinding said coffee directly into a container filling apparatus, with said container filling apparatus delivering said ground coffee directly into said purged containers, sealing said containers to maximize the retention of carbon dioxide and aromatics liberated from said roasted coffee and to minimize the contact of said roasted coffee with the air, said steps of said method completed with minimal delay between successive steps to minimize the loss of carbon dioxide gas liberated from said coffee and to minimize the degassification of said coffee prior to the sealing of said coffee within said containers, said step of grinding said roasted coffee directly into a container filling apparatus carried out within a modified oxygen depleted atmosphere.